6/8/77

Dear Howard,

Thanks for the clipping of Wendell Rawls' story.

Perhaps I was able to help your neighbor writing the Peron book. He called today. My suggestions, naturally, included use of FOIA. I love it!

The enclosure is the real reason I write.

I have been hearing from this fellow off and on for a long time. I can't do anything. However, if he is not nuts there is a good book here. At the least some promising investigative reporting.

If you know anyone who might be interested I have other correspondence from him.

In Rawls' story there are a couple of the minor things one can expect in a complicated story but there is no inaccuracy. He is a good reporter, one you might consider for your board if and when you have need. My feeling is that he is also a good person.

On every point his story is understated, I'm sure not by accident.

He probably has a story on the yesterday hearing in today's paper. I've not seen it. I have Lardner's. Neither Wendell nor I knew there were two press tables, opposite sides of the room. So without intending it I discriminated against him in what I think Lardner enjoyed. Perhaps you will enjoy a related vignette.

Loran Hall was an is an ultra of the right. He knows my view. I have not seen him since 2/68. He is a soldier-of-fortune type, loud, braggart, sort of overgrown boy and I've always felt probably a pathological liar. But of all the investigators and writers he has met - and this includes top LIFE people - I am one of the two he trusts. When the other one and he did not believe my appraisal of this committee and tried to be cooperative it did not work. The first word I got of this when they violated their agreement and used the other, also my friend, to serve a subpoena, was that Hall wanted me to sit with him before the committee. My response was merely that it would not be wise.

It happened that I was with four FBI agents reacting to my vigorous protests about FOOA violations for two hours before the hearing. (Made out okay.) If the hearing had not been late starting it would have been over before I reached the room. The seats were mostly taken so I sat near the door, all the way in back. I was talking with some young friends when the character grabs me from the back, having walked from center stage with all looking. (Rawls missed it.) He told me he wanted to get together after the hearing. I'm sure the committee loves me more for it.

I told Hall Lardner is honest, disagrees with me and would respect confidence. How about him going, too? He agreed. It was virtually all off the record but I'm sure George has some interesting notes for some future time when there would be nothing wrong with using them. If I have no way of guaranteeing truth and would not have assumed it I am impressed that he said after nine years exactly what he had said....Of course I do not believe he killed JFK.

Our views could not be more divergent on any political issue. But he has offered to meet me when I get to LA in a little over a week, put me up and lend me his second car.

Yesterday his lawyer/cousin did drive me how. It is all a little farout but it is also both fun and gratifying. That after none years a man who can get knocked off by the mob over a matter in which four have been killed, two of the four of some prominence, a man who totally disagrees with me politically, still trusts me.

There could be a very commercial and socially useful novel/non-fiction/biography in this man if you know the right person. I'm fairly certain I can arrange it. Aside from trust there are two factors: he hated JFK and wants a record he did not killhim. Best,